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Senate

The Senate met at 10 a.m. and was called to order by the Honorable CINDY HYDE-SMITH, a Senator from the State of Mississippi.

PRAYER

The Chaplain, Dr. Barry C. Black, offered the following prayer:

Let us pray.

Precious Lord, spirit of light and life, Your mercies endure forever.

Guide our lawmakers through the turbulent waters of division and pessimism to Your safe harbor of unity and hope. Keep their hearts clean, their spirits courageous, and their minds clear.

Bless our Nation with Your continued presence as You empower our Senators to be servants for peace and freedom in this world of human need.

And, Lord, we again thank You for the life and legacy of Representative Elijah Cummings.

We pray in Your great Name. Amen.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The Presiding Officer led the Pledge of Allegiance, as follows:

I pledge allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America, and to the Republic for which it stands, one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

APPOINTMENT OF ACTING PRESIDENT PRO TEMPORE

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will please read a communication to the Senate from the President pro tempore (Mr. GRASSLEY).

The assistant bill clerk read the following letter:

U.S. SENATE,
PRESIDENT PRO TEMPORE,

Washington, DC, October 24, 2019.

To the Senate:

Under the provisions of rule I, paragraph 3, of the Standing Rules of the Senate, I hereby appoint the Honorable CINDY HYDE-SMITH, a

Senator from the State of Mississippi, to perform the duties of the Chair.

CHUCK GRASSLEY,
President pro tempore.

Mrs. HYDE-SMITH thereupon assumed the Chair as Acting President pro tempore.

RECOGNITION OF THE MAJORITY LEADER

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The majority leader is recognized.

NOMINATION OF JUSTIN REED WALKER

Mr. McCONNELL. Madam President, later today, the Senate will have the opportunity to confirm another brilliant nominee to the Federal judiciary. In this case, I am proud to say this new lifetime judge will be another fine Kentuckian.

For those of us who know Justin Walker and have seen his work up close, it is clear that President Trump made an outstanding choice to be a district judge for the Western District of Kentucky.

Mr. Walker has sharpened his legal skills at the highest levels, including premier clerkships to then-Judge Brett Kavanaugh of the DC circuit and former Justice Anthony Kennedy.

As a prominent attorney and law professor, he has earned the respect of his peers in the legal world and of the community that he will serve on the bench.

For his students, Mr. Walker has been a mentor who helps push them to fulfill their potential in the classroom and throughout their legal careers.

His thoughtful and deliberate approach fit the mold of a Federal judge who—imagine this—will uphold the laws and the Constitution as they are actually written, not as he might wish them to be.

So I am confident Mr. Walker will serve our Commonwealth and the coun-

try extremely well as a district judge. I look forward to voting to confirm him, and I certainly urge my colleagues to join me.

OPIOID EPIDEMIC

Mr. McCONNELL. Madam President, on another matter, too many times I have had to come to the floor to speak about the pain inflicted on families and entire communities by opioid addiction and substance abuse.

It is a crisis present in every ZIP Code, one that has wrecked lives throughout our country.

My home State of Kentucky has been hit particularly hard, but I am relieved to say that we are seeing at least a glimmer of hope on the horizon.

This past summer brought news of the first nationwide decrease—decrease—in overdose fatalities in almost three decades. Kentucky saw a nearly 15-percent drop. After so much suffering, this is an indication that the tide may be starting to turn.

The result has been hard-won, after years of coordinated efforts between States, localities, and Washington. It has been a nationwide response, and we in Congress, along with the Trump administration, have been focused on doing our part.

Today marks the 1-year anniversary of one key part of our ongoing efforts. One year ago today, President Trump signed into law our landmark opioid legislation that will hopefully spare more families from the pain of addiction.

This legislation included work from 5 different committees and 70 Senators. Thanks to Chairman LAMAR ALEXANDER and so many of our colleagues, this significant package focused on providing innovative solutions, promoting long-term recovery, and empowering local leaders and first responders out on the frontlines.

A little more than a year ago, it passed the Senate with overwhelming

• This “bullet” symbol identifies statements or insertions which are not spoken by a Member of the Senate on the floor.



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